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SUBJECT: ARGENTINA - U.S. CANDIDATE FOR IOM LOBBIES GOA OFFICIALS FOR SUPPORT

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¶1. (SBU) Summary. Visiting Ambassador William Swing met with Argentine Minister of Interior Florencio Anibal Randazzo and then followed up with the MFA's Director General for Multilateral Affairs Raul Ricardes on March 31 to discuss his candidacy for Director General of the International Organization for Migration (IOM). Swing outlined his qualifications for the job and clarified that he was the sole USG-backed candidate. He expressed appreciation for the GOA's ongoing commitment to peacekeeping missions in the Congo and Haiti as well as its efforts to fight trafficking in persons. Both Randazzo and Ricardes indicated that the GOA had not yet determined who it would support in the upcoming June elections. Randazzo said he was impressed by Swing's credentials, and Ricardes indicated that he thought Swing would be particularly helpful in reducing waste in the UN system and in strengthening IOM's coordination with other international organizations. Meetings were positive overall, with Randazzo's official photographer taking numerous photos at the top of the meeting. Press coverage of the visit was uniformly positive. End Summary.

¶2. (SBU) On March 31, Ambassador Swing met with senior level Argentine officials at the Ministry of Interior (MOI) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) in separate meetings on March 31 to discuss his candidacy for Director General of the International Organization for Migration. For the meeting with Minister of Interior Florencio Randazzo, Secretary of Interior Marcio Barbosa Moreira, and Under Secretary of Interior Anibal Jose Pittelli, Swing was accompanied by the Ambassador, Monique Ramgoolie (visiting PRM Program Officer), and Poloff (notetaker). For the meeting with Ambassador Raul Ricardes, MFA Director General of Multilateral Affairs, Swing was accompanied by DCM Kelly, Ramgoolie, and Poloff. Ricardes was accompanied by MFA officials from the North America, Latin America, Consular Affairs, and International Organizations directorates.

Swing's Pitch...

¶3. (SBU) Swing began both meetings by explaining why he believed the USG had nominated him for the position. Citing his years as the UN Special Representative of Secretary General to the UN Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, he noted his experience in managing complex multilateral field operations and coordinating with multiple agencies the international responses to humanitarian crises. He expressed the USG's appreciation for Argentine military observers in the Congo, adding that they were very disciplined troops with whom he worked in the UN's largest peacekeeping operation ever.

14. (SBU) Swing also stated that his understanding of the UN system and close relationships with top UN officials would help in strengthening IOM's collaboration with that body. Regardless of the future relationship between IOM and the UN system - i.e., whether or not the IOM Council decides that IOM should join the UN - Swing stated that he would respect the institutional integrity and missions of IOM and the various UN agencies to avoid duplication of efforts and possible turf battles between them. Finally, he indicated that while some may view his lack of experience in "headquarters" as a weakness, his vast experience "in the field" should be viewed as a strength given IOM's highly decentralized structure.

15. (SBU) Ambassador Swing also clarified that he is the only USG candidate for IOM DG, stating that current IOM DG Brunson McKinley is seeking a third term without USG backing. He explained that the USG does not support McKinley's re-election because the USG and all other IOM member states have adopted an IOM Constitutional amendment to limit the DG to two terms, which the USG and 50 other IOM countries subsequently have ratified. [Note: the amendment is not yet in force as it awaits ratification by two thirds of IOM's 122 members.] In addition, he asserted that it is inappropriate for a candidate to run without his or her government's backing, given that IOM is an intergovernmental organization. He explained that although the IOM DG can be of any nationality, traditionally the position has been held by an American, as USG contributions make up over 20 percent of IOM's budget. He also noted, that the United States, like Argentina, is a country of immigrants, and that the U.S. is the destination for approximately 20% of the world's migrant population.

16. (SBU) Ambassador Swing also noted the excellent work the GOA and the regional IOM office in Argentina have been doing in raising

public awareness and training officials on the problem of human trafficking. He informed Minister Randazzo that PRM provided significant funding for trafficking initiatives and congratulated the Argentine government for making efforts to combat TIP a priority. He also noted that IOM-Argentina is the South American Conference on Migration Secretariat and is organizing the conference in Montevideo in 2008. He also stated that he was glad to see that Argentina is hosting the Global Forum on Migration and Development in 2010.

MOI Response

17. (SBU) Randazzo thanked Ambassador Swing for the meeting and noted that Ambassador Wayne had discussed Swing's candidacy in a meeting on March 26 (Ref A). He stated that he was impressed by the Ambassador's wealth of experience. He indicated that the GOA had not yet defined its position on the candidates, and that the MOI would have to consult and coordinate with its counterparts at the MFA before a decision is made. He thanked the Ambassador for clarifying the USG's position on McKinley's candidacy. When Randazzo asked about the other candidates, Swing indicated that the Canadian candidate did not have support of the Canadian government, and that the Italian candidate had his government's support but was not actively campaigning. Randazzo concluded the meeting by wishing Ambassador Swing, "Good luck. Well no - I wish you success because you don't need good luck." Meeting atmospherics were positive, with Randazzo's official photographer taking numerous photos at the top of the meeting.

MFA Response

18. (SBU) At the top of the meeting with the MFA, Ambassador Ricardes warmly greeted Ambassador Swing, with whom he had served when both men were Ambassadors to Haiti. Swing expressed appreciation for the GOA's ongoing commitment to peacekeeping operations in Haiti, noting that Argentina has over 500 troops on the ground. Swing then launched into his presentation. Afterwards, Ricardes noted that the MFA worked closely with the MOI and the Ministry of Social Development on migration issues. He explained that while the MOI has the main responsibility for developing

national migration policy, the MFA plays the lead role in coordinating the GOA's position in international fora. He agreed with Ambassador Swing's observations on the GOA's on-going efforts to fight human trafficking and expressed hope that the Argentine Congress would soon reach consensus on anti-TIP legislation.

¶9. (SBU) Ricardes indicated that the GOA had not yet decided on a candidate and requested a non-paper outlining Swing's priorities for the organization. Swing replied that leadership was needed in strengthening trust and relationships between member states, partners, and staff. He stated his desire to make IOM more member-focused by having open, transparent consultations with members on important strategic decisions such as IOM's budget, mission, and the future of the IOM-UN relationship. In particular, he noted that IOM will need to define its role in relation to the Global Forum on Migration and Development, which he noted would take place in Argentina in 2010.

¶10. (SBU) Swing also stressed the importance of strengthening IOM partnerships with an eye on collaborating -- not competing -- with UN agencies. He indicated that the international community should avoid duplication of effort and build on each agency's particular strength in providing essential services to migrant populations. Finally, he highlighted the need to strengthen the transparency and accountability of IOM's management, financial, operational, administrative, and personnel policies. Ricardes agreed that there needed to be greater trust and communication between IOM, UN agencies, and member-states. He indicated that he thought Swing would be particularly useful in helping to reduce waste in the UN system and in IOM's coordination with other international organizations.

¶11. (U) Press coverage of Ambassador Swing's visit was limited to several regional articles about his meeting with the Minister and Ambassador Wayne, but the coverage was uniformly positive.
WAYNE